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THESIS FOR THE DOCTORATE

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POOR AND RICH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT  
WITH A STUDY OF עֲשֵׂק IN THE BIBLE  
AND RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

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—BY—

MAURICE THORNER, B. A.



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

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WITH A STUDY OF עֲשֵׂקָה IN THE BIBLE  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

—BY—

MAURICE THORNER, B. A.

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UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

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POOR AND RICH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WITH A  
STUDY OF עֲדָרָה IN THE BIBLE AND  
RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

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INTRODUCTORY.

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A study of Poor and Rich in the Old Testament would properly begin with an examination of the terminology for these economic conditions. A psychological consideration of these words will reveal the thought of the people that employed them, and in the evolution of meaning through which they passed, from their original etymological signification to the figurative sense in which they were later used, and the ethical and religious connotation they received, more especially in the later Psalms, there will be unfolded to us the genesis and growth of the Hebrew conception of Poor and Rich. We will see that in accordance with the law of linguistic and literary growth, and conformably to the tendency of the Oriental mind to give prominence to the physical expression of mental and moral states, the terms for Poor and Rich will originally describe the material or physical aspect of the objects they represent; that, later, their derived or figurative meanings will denote moral states, and that, finally, reflecting social changes and the evolution of Hebrew theology, they will come to stand for new conceptions—Poor will become synonymous with pious, good, righteous; Rich with wicked, godless, oppressive. So from the abundance of Hebrew terms for Poor, each picturing a distinct *nuance* of the conception of physical and moral suffering, will be evidenced the fact, even if there were no other testimony therefor, that the Poor were objects of great concern and solicitude to the founders of the old Hebrew commonwealth. The paucity of distinct terms for the conception of wealth, on the other hand, will demonstrate that not property, but humanity, especially the weaker and less fortunate part thereof, was the chief care of the ancient Hebrews.

The Biblical conception of Poverty and Riches will be found to rest on a religious basis. Economics and religion will be inseparably connected. The former will, originally, be considered a penal condition which must be suffered for one's own or society's misdeeds; the latter, with its concomitants of peace, contentment and happiness, will evidence divine favor, the reward for righteous conduct. A causal relation will thus be established between Poverty and wickedness, and Riches and righteousness. Later, in the so-called "Literature of Poverty," we will note a great change in this conception, when Poor and saint, and Rich and wicked become interchangeable terms.

Righteousness, the watchword of the Law and the Prophets, will be found to be the Biblical solution of the problem of Poverty. When individual unrighteous conduct and social injustice will cease, poverty, a resulting condition from these, will also cease. An ever-growing sympathy for the unfortunate and those that suffer through the maladjustment of social conditions will lead to the correction of civil injustice. Charity will be posited as the means of restoring the social and moral equilibrium which has been disturbed by violence, corruption and oppression. Sympathy for the oppressed, and charity for the unfortunate, crystallized in the Mosaic institutes, will become the constant theme of the Hebrew prophets. To do charity and to labor for civil justice will be the meaning of righteousness ( צִדְקָה ).

צִדְקָה (originally righteousness) will assume the sub-meanings of charity and justice. In later Biblical use it will stand for charity, occasionally, and in the Rabbinical literature צִדְקָה will become the term, *par excellence*, for charity (in the sense of alms).

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## CHAPTER I.

### TERMINOLOGY FOR POOR AND RICH.

#### I. TERMS FOR POOR.

##### A. עָנִי

A common term for Poor in the Old Testament is עָנִי. It is derived from the root ע־נ־ה (Arabic, 'anā), meaning depressed, bent, oppressed, afflicted with sorrow, etc. The root-idea<sup>1</sup> refers to the faint, broken, exhausted appearance of the עָנִי the poor man. He is bent, weighed down under his burden of care, weakened and exhausted by want, imprisoned in the fetters of poverty. His physical suffering, which the root-notion describes, reacts upon his spirits, and hence, the term also depicts the moral condition of the poor man, his humiliation and sorrow. He becomes meek and humble, and falls an easy prey to the unrighteous<sup>2</sup>.

##### B. אָבִיּוֹן

Another common term for Poor is אָבִיּוֹן usually found together with עָנִי.<sup>3</sup> It comes from the root א־ב־ה (Ar. 'abā).

1. See Lev. xvi. 31, and Numb. xxix. 7, וְעִנִּיתָם אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם referring to affliction of soul on Day of Atonement. In Mishnaic use עָנִי means castigation, fasting. In Ps. xxxv, 13, and elsewhere עָנָה is used with יוֹם. Isai. xlviii, 3, 5, it becomes synonymous with יוֹם. See Ps. cii, 24, where it means extreme physical exhaustion, synonymous with "cutting off one's days." Ps. lxxxviii, 15 syn. with נָוֶע, "ready to die." Ps. cv, 18, used with "fetters." Comp. Ar. *ma'nūww*, prisoner). See uses of עָנָה in Gen. xxxl, 42, xv, 13, Ex. i, 11 Deut. viii, 3, xxii, 24, 29; xxvi, 7, Isai. lviii, 10. In later use עָנָה בְּ like Syriac 'enā be means to weary or trouble oneself about anything.

2. Deut. xxiy, 14, 15.

3. See Deut. xv, 11; xxiv, 14; Ps. xl, 18; lxx, 6; lxxxvi, 1; cix, 22, etc.

desirous, demanding, requesting, then, needy<sup>1</sup>. The **אֶבְיוֹן** is a pauper who desires what he has not. He is a "not-have." The demanding, begging attitude of the poor is expressed by this term. The **אֶבְיוֹן** is one who stands in need of everything<sup>2</sup>, whose necessitous condition calls forth charity. "Beggar" would be a good translation of the word, if we use the term in a passive sense as denoting one whose condition appears to beseech others for help, rather than as describing an institution<sup>3</sup>.

The **עָנִי** and the **אֶבְיוֹן** are both weak in an economic sense. They both mark the condition of the poor, but a distinction may be made between them, in that the former describes the poor man as suffering poignantly the deep humiliation of his poverty. It is more broadly characteristic of the mental and moral anguish accompanying want. The **עָנִי** feels more keenly the shame that attaches to his condition. **אֶבְיוֹן** on the other hand, stands for poor man with special reference to his want of the necessities of life. The **אֶבְיוֹן** feels hunger gnawing at his stomach; he shivers in the cold. To the **עָנִי** poverty is oppressive, burdensome, crushing; to the **אֶבְיוֹן** it spells want, emptiness.

1. **אָהַב** means to be willing, to be obedient, i. e., to desire to do; to desire, to wish for intensely, to lust after. See Deut. xiii, 9; Ps. lxxxi, 12; Prov. i, 30, etc. We find another substantive, **תַּאֲבָה**. Ps. cxix, 20. This is probably derived from a secondary form, **תַּאֲב** Ps. cxix, 40, 174.

2. Amos ii, 6; viii, 6, where the **אֶבְיוֹן** is sold for a pair of shoes. Job xxxi, 19, where he perishes for want of covering. 1 Sam. ii, 8, where his surroundings are compared to a dung-hill.

3. There was, perhaps, no such social class as beggars in ancient Israel. We find no technical term for them, only the paraphrase **מִבְּקֵשׁ לֶחֶם** Ps. xxxvii, 25, and **שָׂאֵל וָנוֹעַ** Ps. cix, 10, used with **נוֹעַ** to wander about. Both instances indicating, no doubt, that begging was a spectacle seldom seen.

C. רִשׁ.

רִשׁ is another term often employed, especially in Proverbs, for Poor. If we derive רִשׁ from רִשׁ (related to רִשַׁשׁ), meaning to push, drive, etc., it would signify the restless, driven, hunted feeling of the poor<sup>2</sup>. He is driven from place to place, impelled by want. Impulsion from within or without is here expressed. The poverty of the רִשׁ drives him on, leaves him no rest, perturbs his mind, or, objectively considered, society seems to push him away, to coerce him into the inferior position he must fill. But the word may be, perhaps, more correctly, derived from the root יִרַשׁ<sup>3</sup> with apocoped יִרַשׁ. רִשׁ would then mean a poor man, with the subaudition of one who is dispossessed from or deprived of his rightful share of earthly goods.

D. דָּל.

From the root-notion<sup>4</sup> ( דָּל weak, hovering, slack, flabby, lean), דָּל would mark the weak, unsettled, defenseless condition of the poor, in contradistinction to תָּקִיָּה (settled, firm, a term used in later Hebrew for a man of substance). They, therefore, become an easy prey to the unscrupulous, and an available tool in the hand of oppressors. The term would mark, first, the physical appearance of the poor, they are weak, lean, emaciated, and then it would depict instability in a moral sense.

1. רִשׁ is the participle. The form רִשִּׁית is also found. See Prov. x, 4, etc.

2. In Mal, i, 4, the Pual and in Jer. v, 17, the Poal have the meaning of being destroyed.

3. In Kal, Niphal, Hiphil, יִרַשׁ has the privative meaning of dispossessing, impoverishing (continued in note a, next page).

4. See note 4 on next page.



## E. מָּךְ.

מָּךְ a participle from מוּךְ which means depressed, lowly, come down, is another term employed for poor. From the meaning of the related roots<sup>1</sup>, מוּךְ would describe the lowly, shrunken, shriveled appearance of the poor, both physically and morally. The term marks the physical appearance of poverty more especially. It is the external expression of poverty. (Comp. Deut. xxviii, 43, where verbs descriptive of something ocular are employed to denote prosperity and poverty.)

## F. מִסְכֵּן

We find also the word מִסְכֵּן for poor. It is a loan-word from the Assyrian, found in Syriac, Ethiopic, Aramaic and Arabic. From the last it has gone over into the Romance tongues<sup>2</sup>. In the O. T. we find it only in Eccl. iv, 13 and ix, 15, and a substantive מִסְכֵּנָה in Deut. viii, 9. From the root סָכַן (like יִשְׁכֵּן and

a. Judg. xiv, 15, Gen. xl, 11, Prov. xx, 13, xxiii, 21, xxx 9.

In Prov. xxx, 9, יִרֵשׁ has definitely the meaning of becoming poor. If we derive רֵשׁ from יִרֵשׁ, the term may then intend to convey the notion, held in later Israel by the communistic or *Anavistic* orders, that the poor were wrongfully dispossessed of this earth (which the creator had given to all alike, (Ps. cxv, 16), by the רָשָׁעִים or wicked rich.

4. See Isai. xix, 6, where the brooks רָלְלוּ, used with הָרָבוּ. Ps. lxxix, 8, cxvi, 6, cxlii, 7, where it means to be weak, impoverished. Gen. xli, 17, used of lean cows; Jug. vi, 15, where it means weak, insignificant. 2 Sam. xiii, 4, where it is used for the thin, careworn face of one burning with lust. It is used in connection with אָבִיוֹן Ps. lxxi, 13, Prov. xiv, 31, Isai, xxv, 4, Amos ii, 6, viii, 6, etc. The latter Hebrew forms a substantive, פְּלוּרָה meaning poverty. See פְּלוּרָה 2 K. xxiv, 14, Jer. xl, 7.

1. מוּךְ to melt, מִכָּךְ to sink, be compressed Ar. *makka* to suck out. Comp. Aramaic מִכָּךְ afflicted, humbled. See Lev xxv, 47, xxvii, 8, and xxv, 25, 35, 39.

2. It. *meschino*, Portuguese, *mesquinho*, Fr. *mesquin*.

Arabic *sakana*) to rest, dwell, or being compelled to inactivity, comes the derived meaning of being in want. The inactive, passive condition of the poor is denoted by the word. There may have been originally the subaudition in the term, that idleness produces poverty on the one hand, or on the other, that the poor are cut off from the avenues of activity and business which produces wealth.

## G. הֵלֵךְ

הֵלֵךְ from הָלַךְ to walk, used in 2 Sam. xii, 4, in contradistinction to עָשִׂיר is considered also a poor-term by the Jewish commentators. It is here used synonymously with אֲרֵם meaning a traveler or stranger. It may not be too fanciful to find a modern parallel to הֵלֵךְ in the English word, "tramp," a term descriptive of the vagrant poor.

## H. חֲלָכָה

חֲלָכָה is found only in Ps. x, 8, and x, 14, with a plural חֲלָכָאִים in verse 10. If this is the correct reading (and not חֵילָךְ "thy host") as it appears to be, since it is used synonymously with נִקְיָה in x, 8, and parallel with יְתוֹם, in x, 14, then we have here another term for poor. It would come from a root חָלַךְ (Arabic *halaka* dark, bleak, dreary, sorrowful, unhappy), marking the hopelessness of poverty, the subjective depression of the poor which reflects itself in their gloomy countenance.

## I. דָּךְ

דָּךְ from the root דָּכָךְ (like דָּכָה, דָּחָה, דָּוָךְ Ar. *dakka*) to grind, mash, would indicate the violence that the poor must suffer at the hands of the powerful. In Ps. x, 18, it is used with תוֹם in Ps. lxxiv, 21, as a synonym of אֲבִיוֹן and נָנִי.

## J. ערער

ערער is found in Ps. cii, 18 and Jer. xvii, 6<sup>1</sup>. It comes from a root ערר (related roots ערה, ערם, ערס, ערך, עור, עור) Ar. 'arra which means to be scratched off, scabby, then uncovered, naked, and in a derived sense, lonely, solitary, deserted. It would indicate the deserted state of the poor. (Prov. xiv, 25, gives expression to the same notion, that the rich have many friends, but the poor are solitary).

The word ערער is found in the Bible in two places: Ps. cii, 18 and Jer. xvii, 6. In both cases it is used to describe a state of loneliness or desertion. The word is derived from the root ערר, which means to be scratched off, scabby, then uncovered, naked, and in a derived sense, lonely, solitary, deserted.

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ערער has also the meaning of "deserted" in Jer. xlviii, 6.

## 2. TERMS FOR RICH.

### A. עֲשִׂיר

עֲשִׂיר from the root<sup>1</sup> conveys the idea of fatness, abundance, plenty. It may be contrasted with the Poor-term רָל meaning lean, wasted. The root-idea marks more prominently the physical aspect of the rich man. The rich are fat, well-fed; they shine with prosperity.<sup>2</sup> The notion of fulness and abundance which עֲשִׂיר conveys, with its corollary of happiness, power, influence, reflects the early conception of wealth as being a blessing of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> This is the most generally employed term for Rich in the Old Testament. It is, perhaps, the only distinct term therefor.

### B. שָׁוַע

The meaning of שָׁוַע<sup>4</sup> from which שָׁוַע comes, is wide, extended, and in a derived sense, to be in a fortunate situation, pleasant, to be noble, eminent. It has always a complimentary connotation, whereas עֲשִׂיר is often used to mark the rich man as one who by reason of his easy, affluent position is liable to be filled with pride, to become extravagant, luxurious and then oppressive.<sup>5</sup>

1. Heb. עֲשִׂיר Syr. 'etar much, abundant; comp. Ar. 'atila much, plentiful. עָתַר means, transitively, to heap up, intrans. to be rich (Ezek., xxv, 13).

2. Amos iv, 1, compares the rich to the "kine of Bashan."

3. See Prov. x, 22; viii, 18; iii, 16; In Prov. "Wisdom" helps a man to riches, "Folly" makes him and keeps him poor. עֲשִׂיר is probably related to אֲשֶׁר lucky, fortunate, happy.

4. Related to שָׁוַע (comp. Ar. *wasī'a* Conj. VIII, X) spread out, extended, broad, applied to being rescued from straitness, to escape; see שָׁוַע הַ "salvation," "happiness," Job xxx, 15; "victory," 1 Sam. xiv, 45, and תְּשׁוּעָה "victory," 2 Sam. xix, 3; 2 K v, 1.

5. See Prov. xviii, 23; xxii, 7; Micah vi, 12; Isai, liii, 9. In the Ps. especially, the עֲשִׂיר becomes synonymous with רָשָׁע "wicked."

שׁוֹעַ is a term applied to the liberal, generous and noble rich. In Isai. xxxii, 5, it is used in a parallel sense to נָדִיב.<sup>1</sup>

עֲשִׂיר and שׁוֹעַ are the only distinct terms for Rich that we find in the Old Testament.

### C.

There are, however, several terms for riches found in the Old Testament which, from their etymological and derived meanings, may serve to further illustrate and unfold the Old Testament conception of Poor and Rich. הוֹן from root הוּן Ar. *hānā* easy, comfortable. (Syriac *hūnā* used of intelligence as a species of spiritual or intellectual wealth). It has the further meaning of sufficiency (see its adverbial meaning, "enough," in Prov. xxx, 15, 16). It may be compared to our English use of the word "competency," for a man's wealth. The word marks the external, physical, and inner, moral condition of its possessor; the ease and comfort it brings him. In Ps. cxii, 3, it is used with עֲשִׂיר as a reward to the God-fearing man. In Prov. vi, 31, it refers to the booty of the thief.

אֹון (root אָון to exert force, to weary (Ar. *āna*)). It means power, strength. In the two instances (Hos. xii, 9, and Job, xx, 10), where it is used for riches, it has the uncomplimentary connotation of ill-gotten. When so used, it may signify, objectively, the power, force, oppression, employed in the attainment of unrighteous wealth, or subjectively considered, the suffering caused to the despoiled. There is the subaudition of force, power and violence, in the word, reflecting the belief that there is something violent in the origin of wealth, or referring to the power and influence the wealthy wield. A somewhat similar explanation may be given of the use of הִיל for wealth (see Deut. viii, 17, 18). הִיל from הוֹל (Ar. *hāla* means force, strength, vigor, and may refer to the strength required to acquire wealth through working the soil, or making conquests in war, or securing booty by robbery.

1. Here the נָדִיב is not a בָּיִל; he is free from deceit, fraud; he is liberal and bountiful. The נָדִיב (from נָדַב Ar. *nodaba* move, incite), is one who is easily moved, or susceptible to noble emotions which express themselves in his liberality and kindness. He is known by his liberality in giving gifts (Prov. xix, 6). Comp. נָדַבָה Ex. xxv, 29, "a free-will offering," and נָדִיב לֵב "liberal of heart." 2 Chron. xxix, 31. In Job xxxiv, 19, the שׁוֹעַ is put in the same category with שָׂר (prince).

### 3. POOR AND RICH IN THE SO-CALLED POVERTY LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The preceding examination of the terms for Poor and Rich showed that they originally described the physical and moral aspect of the economic conditions to which they refer. We saw how the moral content of the terms was derived from an expansion or evolution of the physical conception. A further evolution is seen when we note the application made of them by the prophets of Israel<sup>1</sup>, but more especially, in the later Psalms, which have been aptly termed the "Literature of Poverty."<sup>2</sup> In these Psalms<sup>3</sup> the terms for Poor and Rich receive connotations which mark a new order of thought. The former become synonymous with the highest ethical and religious virtues, while the latter stand for "wicked," "violent," "oppressive." This new conception of poverty and riches had its origin in the sharper demarcation of the social classes which began with the reign of Solomon.<sup>4</sup> With this king there was inaugurated a period of commercial activity which brought affluence to some, and made sharper the distinction between poor and rich. They began to be separated by an ever-widening chasm. Riches brought luxury, extravagance, avarice, vice. Under Jereboam II, corruption, robbery, violence, calls forth the prophets' denunciations. The poor were the conservators of morality and religion, and the

1. Amos ii, 6, where צדיק and אבין are classed together; Isai, xi, 4, where רשע stands for the rich oppressor; Isai, xiv, 30; Zach, ix, 9, Micah, vi, 12; Isai, liii, 9, etc.

2. Isidore Loeb—*La Littérature des Pauvres dans la Bible*, Paris, 1892.

3 See especially Ps. ii, iv, x, xxii, xxvii, xxx, xxxi, xxxv, xxxvii, xxxviii, xlii, xlix, lxviii, lxix, lxxiii, lxxiv, lxxxviii, cvii, cix, cxvi, cxxiii, cxlii, cxli.

4. J. Benzinger—*Hebräische Archäologie*, Leipzig, 1894, pp. 174, 350, and W. Nowach—*Lehrbuch der Hebr. Arch.*, Leipzig, 1894, Erster Band, p. 250. See 2 Sam. viii, 14; 1 K. ix, 26; x, 22; 2 Chr. viii, 17.

prophets became their champions.<sup>1</sup> The prophets based their political economy on their theological beliefs, and their teachings became the tenets of their disciples, and later formed the platform of a distinct party or school<sup>2</sup> who preached the gospel of poverty.<sup>3</sup> These were the *Anavim* (from עָנִי poor, humble) and later the *Ebionim*<sup>4</sup> (from עֲבִיּוֹן poor). The authors of the Psalms which make up this "Poverty" literature were the poets of the party, and gave literary expression to its principles. According to the *Anavistic* belief, the poor were the protégés of the Lord.<sup>5</sup> They obeyed His commands, kept themselves pure and holy, and were ever zealous in the cause of righteousness and justice. On the other hand, the rich were considered apostates from the true faith. It was during the second temple when the rich and aristocratic Jews were attracted by Greek institutions which the Syrians had introduced, and apostatized, that the distinction between poor and rich became especially marked. The *Anavim* who formed the party known as the *Chasi-*

1. Hosea vi, 9; Isai. v, 8; iii, 14, 15; x, 2; xi, 4; xxvi, 6; xxix, 19; xxxii, 7; xli, 17, and especially lviii, 7. Jer. xx, 13; xxii, 16. Ezek. xvi, 49; xviii, 12, 17; xxii, 29. Amos iv, 1; v, 11, 12; viii, 4. Zeph. iii, 12. Zach. xii, 10, etc.

2. That they formed a party or community may be seen from the expressions: קהל חסידים Ps. cxlix, 1; סוד ישרים ועדה Ps. cxi, 1; דור ישרים Ps. cxii, 2.

3. See Renan—History of the Peop. of Is., Vol. III, ch. iv.

4. The *Ebionim* were the first Christians. See Renan, *ibid.*

5. See Ps. lxxii, 2; lxxiv, 19, etc., where they are called the "Lord's poor." Comp. Ps. xxxvii, 22, where "His Blessed" (מְבָרְכִי) shall inherit the earth." And verse 25, where the righteous (צַדִּיק) is never deserted nor his seed reduced to beggary. See Ps. lxxiii, 25, where the poor man offers his profession of faith: "Whom have I in heaven? and beside Thee I desire nothing upon earth."

*dim* ( חסידים <sup>1</sup> “pious ones”) opposed with patriotic zeal the Hellenization of their country, and regarded the rich apostate as the type of impiety and wickedness.

When we come to examine this literature, we find numerous appellations given to the poor, all of which are descriptive of the highest and noblest moral and religious attributes.<sup>2</sup> The עני and אביון are no longer miserable, wretched sufferers, desponding, depressed, humiliated, as the terms imply. Though they are poor in worldly possessions, they are rich in divine favor. They will inherit the earth, and be the abiding party long after their opponents, the rich, have been vanquished (Ps. xxxvii).

The rich, on the other hand, have become the “wicked” ( רשעים ). They are the enemies of the poor, and therefore, the Lord’s enemies. Words depicting deceit, violence, corruption, injustice, are employed to describe them, and to illustrate their actions.

It would argue that there had been centuries of oppression, cruelty, vice, and profligacy on the part of the rich, that only un-

1. In the Maccabean age חסיד and עני become interchangeable.

2. See interesting and suggestive synonyms and paraphrases for poor in Ps. xxxvii. (This Psalm affords an excellent study for poor and rich.) The Poor are called “upright” ( ישר ) and “pure” ( תם ) Ps. xxxvii, 37). “Seekers of God” ( דורשי אלהים Ps. lxix, 33); “Those that know His name” ( יורעי שמו ix, 11); “Those that hope in Him” ( קוי יהוה xxxvii, 9); “The righteous” ( צדיקים xxxvii, 16); “Those of upright ways” ( ישרי דרך xxxvii, 14); “His blessed” ( מברכיו xxxvii, 22); “His saints” ( חסידיו xxxvii, 28); “Protected ones” ( צפניך lxxxiii, 4); “The Lord’s heritage” [ נחלתך xxviii, 9); “The Lord’s poor” ( ענייך lxxii, 2); “His flock” ( צאן מרעיתך lxxiv, i); “His lovers (cxlv, 20 אוהביו “Lovers of His name” ( אהבי שמי lxix, 37); “His beloved” ( ירידך lx, 7); “His children” ( בניך lxxxiii, 15); “His anointed” ( משיחך lxxxiv, 9); “Those that call on Him” ( קראיו clv, 20); “Those that trust in Him” ( חוכים בך xxxix, 20); “The faithful” ( אמונים xxxi, 24).



complimentary ideas are connected with them in this literature.<sup>1</sup> The terms for poor, **עני, אביון, דל** etc., are nearly always found to accompany their synonyms and paraphrases, but the terms for rich, on the contrary, are usually omitted, and only their synonyms or paraphrases used in their place. To say "oppressor," "wicked," "man of deceit," sufficiently indicated that reference was made to what were considered the powerful and wicked rich. This inferential use of opprobrious names for rich, mirrors the bitter enmity that existed between the classes, and serves as an illuminative commentary on social conditions in ancient Israel. Psalm lxxiii may be cited as a typical expression of *Anaxistic* sentiment concerning the rich. Their prosperity ( **שְׁלוֹם** ) fills them with pride. They become fearless, bold. "Violence ( **חַמָּס** ) covers them as a garment." "They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression." (On **עִשָּׁק** which is used here for "oppression," Rashi comments **לְעִשָּׁק אֲבִיוֹנִים** "to oppress the poor is meant.")<sup>2</sup> They speak irreverently against heaven. Their pompous, bloated appearance is alluded to: "Their eyes stand out with fatness," verse 7.

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1. See in particular Ps. lxxiii: They are called "wicked" ( **רָשָׁעִים** Ps. x 2, lxxiii, 2; cix, 16, etc. This is the term *par excellence* for the rich in the "poverty" literature). They are "robbers" ( **גֹּזְלֵי** xxxv, 10); "unrighteous and violent" ( **חַמְּסֵי, חַמְּסֵי** lxxi, 4); "Devourers of the Lord's people" ( **אֹכְלֵי יְמִי** liii, 5); "They 'lie in wait' for the poor (x, 9); 'pursue' them (cix, 16); 'draw the sword and bend the bow' on them (xxxvii, 14); They are 'men of violence' (xviii, 49 **אִישׁ חַמָּס** ); They are guilty of 'oppression' ( **עִשָּׁק** x, 7; lv, 12; lxxii, 14, etc.). In prov. xxix, 13, the term **אִישׁ תַּכְבִּים** is used in contradistinction to **רֶשֶׁת**.

2. See Rashi ( **רש"י** so-called from his initials, Rabbi Solomon Isaaki of Troyes, 1040-1105) on Ps. lxxiii, 8.

## CHAPTER II.

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### BIBLICAL CONCEPTION OF POVERTY AND RICHES.

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#### I. POVERTY.

Poverty, according to the earlier Biblical view, is looked upon as an affliction, an undesirable condition, as the terms for poor, etymologically, imply. It is considered a punishment for wrongdoing, for sin, either on the part of the individual who suffers it, or of society. In the very first instance where poverty-producing conditions are mentioned, we find man's transgressions given as the cause thereof.<sup>1</sup> There is a distinction made, however, in the causes of poverty. One is social wrong, civic injustice, that produces a large army of innocent poor, those who are poor through no fault of their own, but suffer poverty by reason of corrupt social institutions; the other cause is the poor man's individual sin, his vices and shortcomings. The former cause is, by far, the more important, though both are, by their very nature, correlative. Men are made poor, and kept so, by being defrauded of their rights, by having their property unjustly taken from them, by political corruption (Isai. v, 8; Jer. xxii, 13; xvii, 11; Micah, vi, 10, 12; Nahum iii, 1, etc.). Social wrong, however, offends the Lord, who will employ natural agencies to effectuate His displeasure. He will send "the sword

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1. Gen. iv, 17.

and pestilence" famine and all manner of plagues, as a punishment.<sup>1</sup> But these afflictions contribute to produce still more poverty. When the prophets paint the terrible ravages of war which social injustice will bring on, they have in mind the economic costliness thereof. War withdraws from the fruitful pursuits of peace, the tillers of the soil. The strength of the land goes forth to battle. Then, there is added the positive loss due to the destruction caused by the enemy (Jer. v, 17). War produces cripples, orphans, widows. Thus, famine, pestilence, war, which are sent to punish society for "grinding the faces of the poor,"<sup>2</sup> for robbing and despoiling them, become a further source of suffering and poverty to those who are already the victims of the cause that produces these afflictions. The punishment which lays low the mighty and powerful, falls also heavily on the innocent poor. Hence, civic wrong is directly and indirectly productive of poverty. Those who are impoverished through the exploitation of the wicked rich, and suffer, necessarily, when justice is executed on the guilty, find in the Hebrew prophets their defenders. It is for them that they hurl their denunciations against oppressors and corruptionists. The poor-laws in the Pentateuch are made, also, for this class of innocent poor, the victims of the social cause of poverty.

It is in the so-called *Chochmah* or "wisdom" literature of the Bible, that we find the fullest expression of individual responsibility for poverty. It is here that man's vices and delinquencies

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1. See Ezek. vi, 11; 2 Sam. xxi, 1; Jer. xi, 22; xiv, 12; Joel. i, 4; Isai. li, 19, etc. The rabbis held the same belief. See *Dicta of the Fathers*, v, 11: *הרב באה לעולם על-עניי הרין ועל-עוונות הרין* "The sword comes into the world for the delay of Justice, and for the perversion of Justice, etc."

2. Isai. iii, 15.

are condemned as poverty-producing agents. Idleness, sloth,<sup>1</sup> avarice, uncharitableness,<sup>2</sup> deceit, pleasure-seeking, vanity, gourmandizing, drunkenness, harlotry,<sup>3</sup> are given as causes of poverty. To ignorance, also, is attributed want. One who refuses מוֹסֵר (instruction, correction) will become poor. Lack of wisdom makes a man poor.<sup>4</sup> But we must understand by "wisdom" here, not so much intellectual agility, as moral discernment. In the Book of Proverbs the penal nature of poverty is recognized. The righteous and the wise shall escape it. It will befall only the wicked, the vicious and the foolish. Personal vices are punished with poverty. They are extravagant in an economic sense.

The request of Agur<sup>5</sup> that poverty become not his portion, reflects the opinion, held throughout Proverbs generally, that poverty is an undesirable condition. For the poor are shut off from the activities of life; they are despised, run danger of falling into sin, (want making them steal, Prov. xxx, 9), and are ever on the verge of destruction.

Unrighteousness, then, is given as the ultimate cause of poverty. Man transgresses the divine commands, and in consequence must suffer. According to the Hebrew conception, there is a causal nexus between the moral and the physical world. In Deut. xxviii, it is expressly threatened that the punishment for disobeying divine law will consist in the "curse" of poverty. The soil, kine, flocks, all, will become sterile, and war will bring its evil and destruction. And this threat is constantly reiterated by the prophets. This doctrine,

1. Prov. vi, 10, 11; xx, 4.

2. x, 4; xi, 24.

3. xxi, 6; v, 10; vi, 26; xxviii, 19; xxiii, 21.

4. Prov. xiii, 18. The man without "wisdom" in Prov. is a "fool." פֶּסִיל and לוֹאֵל mean "fool," with the subaudition of unrighteousness, ungodliness. So חִכְמָה "wisdom" means moral rather than intellectual discernment.

5. Prov. xxx, 8.

that wickedness is the forerunner of misfortune, is taught in the Old Testament with regard to nations and individuals.

The *Anavistic* opinion of poverty, as reflected in the Psalms, is quite in contrast to that we have just seen. Poverty becomes the condition of sainthood. The poor are not the "cursed," but the "blessed." (Compare Matt. v, 3). Spiritual poverty is here regarded as a misfortune, a sort of punishment that the wicked receive; but material wealth has little or no value. The *Anavim* would not change their poverty for riches, for it would have to be done at the expense of the Lord's friendship. The rich are His enemies.

## 2. RICHES.

Riches, the Bible considers a token of divine favor. "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich," (Prov. x, 22) expresses the Biblical belief in the divine source of wealth. The institutions of tithes, first-fruits, thanksgiving offerings, would also give evidence of this belief.<sup>1</sup> While Israel was a pastoral people, their wealth consisted in flocks and kine, and when they followed agriculture, there was added to this, the produce of the soil, wheat, grain, wine, oil, etc. If their flocks increased, if the soil was fruitful, riches accumulated. But such increase and fertility depended on favorable conditions of nature, that is, on the blessings of heaven, and these would be given only for obedience to the commands of the Lord. (Deut. xxviii). Hence the blessing that made rich was the reward for righteousness. To an agricultural and pastoral people, peace is, also, essential to prosperity. This, too, is promised as a reward for social morality. The millennial promises of the prophets are based on the universal reign of social justice (Isai. ii, 2-4; Micah

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1. Giving tithes, first-fruits, etc., would be a recognition that all things come from the Lord, and would be a symbolical rendering to Him (or His priests) of His due.

iv, 2-4, where peaceful security and individual prosperity are the reward of walking in the paths of the Lord). When civic righteousness prevails, and corruption and oppression have been eliminated from society, the Lord will bestow His blessings in the form of material and spiritual wealth. Social equity will conduce to the general welfare. All will enjoy its fruits.

Wealth, then, comes as a natural result of righteousness.<sup>1</sup> The happiness, peace, comfort, and security which the Hebrew terms for rich, in their complimentary sense denote, are God's blessings. They represent and symbolize the favor He shows to a righteous people which builds its institutions on truth and justice, watches over the weak, cares for the unfortunate, and jealously guards and protects the rights of the defenceless. The Lord rewards those who are careful to pay Him tithes and offerings, which go to the priests and levites, and those who pay their debt to the Lord, in giving the orphan, widow and stranger the gleanings of the field, etc. A people which in Biblical language, walks in the ways of the Lord, will be prosperous, and know nothing of poverty.

But this collective morality which finds favor in the eyes of God, and brings His blessings, implies righteous conduct on the part of the individual. If the individual would escape poverty and enjoy wealth, he must become "wise" enough to recognize that a causal relation exists between right and prosperous. The "wise" man will walk through life "with his eyes in his head" (Ecc. ii, 14); he will not be guilty of immorality in any form—idleness, vice, debauchery, fraud, falsehood, for his "wisdom" consists in recognizing that all these are detestable in the sight of the Lord, and will

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1. See Ex. xxiii, 20, ff. Deut. xxviii; Lev. xxvi. Applied to individuals, this doctrine is repeatedly insisted on in the Bk. of Prov. Cf. also Jer. vii, 5-7; Isai. lviii, 7; Ps. i.

2. See note 4, p. 17.

be punished with destruction and poverty, whereas the virtues of liberality, industry, etc. (Prov. xi, 25 ; xiii, 11 ; iii, 9) will be recompensed with increase.

Civic righteousness or public justice, and individual, "wise" (i. e., God-fearing) conduct, are posited by the ancient Hebrews, as the means of winning divine favor, which will realize and manifest itself through natural, wealth-producing agents.

We should note, however, the distinction that is made between righteous wealth and ill-gotten riches. The latter is condemned. Its acquirement does not indicate heavenly favor. There is no blessing attached to it, and it will not abide.<sup>1</sup> "He that trusteth in riches acquired through fraud, shall fail." (Prov. xl, 28). In Isai. v, 7, 8, the method of getting rich unjustly is shown. But there shall be no protection in such riches. The Mosaic laws against usury, fraud, deceitful balances, oppressive treatment of employes, etc., were intended to operate against the accumulation of unrighteous wealth.

But wealth *per se*, honorably gotten, and properly used, is not condemned in the Bible. It is, on the contrary, considered a mark of God's pleasure. However, the danger that attaches to it is marked out. It may lead to vanity and pride, and make its possessor forgetful of God.<sup>2</sup> Deut. warns the Israelite not to be lured from righteous living by wealth, and the Bk. of Prov. has numerous references to the dangers of wealth.<sup>3</sup> In the later, *Anavistic* view, riches are condemned because of this danger. They are considered only in an unfavorable light. The rich man is wicked, extravagant, vicious, always on the alert to *defraud the unwary and oppress the*

1. Prov. x, 2.

2. Prov. xxx, 9, "Lest I become over-full and deny Thee."

3. Prov. viii, 11 ; x, 15 ; xi, 28 ; xiii, 7 ; xv, 6 ; xvi, 8.

*weak* in order to increase his wealth. And because of his harsh and cruel treatment of the poor, who are considered God's children, he becomes an enemy of the Lord.

### 3. SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY.

The Biblical solution of the problem of poverty is not found in an economic readjustment of society, for poverty, according to the Bible, is not due to a faulty system of distribution, as modern socialists maintain, or, ultimately, to the niggardliness of nature, as other schools of political economy hold, but to society's or the individual's moral delinquencies. It is considered penal in its nature. When the cause of poverty is found in unrighteousness, the remedy suggests itself. Let man, socially and individually, lead a just, God-fearing, righteous, life and there will be no poverty. This is the teaching of the Pentateuch and the Prophets. The seeming contradiction between Deut. xv, 4, which speaks of the time when there shall be no poor in Israel, promising the cessation of poverty as a reward for hearkening unto the voice of the Lord, and xv, 11, which says "The poor shall never cease out of the land," apparently doubting the possibility of the complete and final removal of poverty from among mankind, is reconciled when we consider that the former verse refers to Israel exclusively, with whom prosperity will be found when the Lord's commands are strictly followed, whereas, xv, 11, makes reference to the other nations who have not yet come under Yahweh's laws. These two verses would express the belief that poverty will cease in Israel as soon as God's law becomes man's rule of conduct, but will not disappear from the earth until Yahweh is recognized as the sovereign of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See Rashi's comment: "How can we reconcile these two verses? The law-giver means that when ye will do the will of God, the poor will be found among others, and not among you; but when ye do not the will of God, then ye will have the poor."



The Pentateuch sees, then, in the establishment of righteousness the cure for poverty. And the prophets of Israel teach the same doctrine (Isai. i, 16-19; lviii, 7, 8; Hos. xiv, 5, etc.). Their cry is for civic righteousness, for justice. To injustice they attribute the existence of the large number of the "social" poor, those who become impoverished because their rights are wrested from them. This defenseless class is not paid for its labor, and is defrauded of justice in courts of law through the collusion of judges and the powerful. Bribery, corruption, violence, robbery, deprive these poor of their rightful share in earth's bounty. If, therefore, those in power would prevent this exploitation of the weak, if judges were just, and not bribe-takers, if men were honest and righteous in their transactions, the earth would bask in the sunshine of God's favor (Isai. lviii, 6-14).

In close connection with righteousness, we find charity insisted on as a remedy for poverty. Charity is an obligation on the part of the rich, and a right of the poor. The admonitions to do charity, which we find in the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the later writings, are based on the belief that the poor have a right to expect it. The gleanings of field, olive-yard, vineyard, etc., which are given to the poor (Lev. xix, 9, 10; Deut. xxiv, 19 ff), the orphan, widow and stranger, are viewed as their rightful property. To withhold it from them, is to rob them, to oppress them, and the Lord will surely punish such unrighteousness. So, withholding tithes and offerings which belong to the priests and levites, and are the only means of support of this dependent class, is stigmatized as robbery. It is robbing the Lord (Mal. iii, 8-12), because the priests and levites are the Lord's servants.

The gleanings of field and vineyard, the levitical assessments, etc., are enforced gifts. It is a form of compulsory charity. It is char-

acteristic of the Biblical idea of charity that it is something compulsory on man, and not dependent on his own inclination. It is a debt man owes to the Lord, for, from the Lord comes all he possesses. When the poor cry for help, they must be aided, else it is a sin against him who closes his ear to their request.

Thus, charity becomes an adjuvant to justice as a cure for poverty. Justice<sup>1</sup> and charity constitute righteousness (צדקה), and in this the problem of poverty finds its solution.

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1. Cf. the insistence of the importance of Justice in the rabbinical view: על שלשה דברים דעולם קים . על-האמת ועל-הדין ועל-השלום "By three things is the world preserved, by Truth, by Judgment (Justice) and by Peace." Dicta of the Fathers I, 18.

## CHAPTER III.

### צִדְקָה

#### IN THE BIBLE AND RABBINICAL LITERATURE.

The social equilibrium which is disturbed by the division between Poor and Rich, must be re-established by Righteousness. ( צִדְקָה ). We have seen the importance placed on this in the Bible. Its execution on the part of man, will establish Justice on earth (and, therefore, Justice becomes one of its sub-meanings), and in so doing it operates as charity to those to whom the establishment of Justice would bring relief, and restoration of their rights. How צִדְקָה comes to receive this connotation of charity for which it is used in the later books of the Bible, and for which it stands *par excellence* in the rabbinical literature, will be disclosed by a study of its uses and applications.

In Gen. xv, 6, Abraham's belief in the Lord is credited to him as a צִדְקָה (Targ. Onkelos translates it מְרִיבֵי merit). צִדְקָה here, receives the subaudition of something meritorious. It is used to describe conduct which is prompted, voluntarily, by a certain spiritual attitude towards God. The element of voluntariness should be noted. Abraham is not compelled to believe in the promise of a numberless progeny. But his trust in God leads him to believe, and this voluntary giving of belief is marked as a צִדְקָה.

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1. From צִדְקָה (Ar. *Sadaka*) hard, firm, straight, following a prescribed norm. In a theocratic sense, used of one who walks in the ways of God. The noun has the sense of Justice in Judg. v, 11; Ps. ciii, 6, etc.

Though charity in the Biblical view is compulsory, and not altogether dependent on the inclination of the individual, yet he that gives charity voluntarily, and not because the law compels him to, is the true צדיק righteous man. Hence, the notion of something voluntarily given which we find here in צדקה illustrates or evidences the existence of a germinal idea of charity in it.

In Deut. vi, 25, the observance on the part of the Israelites of the commandments will be a צדקה<sup>1</sup> on their part. Here, again, the idea of something voluntarily given is connoted. The commandments were given to be obeyed, yet this obedience was voluntary on the part of the people (see Dept. xxx, 15, ff). In xxiv, 13, the act of returning, before sunset, the poor man's garment taken in pledge, is spoken of as a צדקה. The implication of benevolence, sympathy, charity, is clearly evident. צדקה stands forth here as an act of charity.

Neh. ii, 20, makes צדקה synonymous with חֶלֶק (portion). It has here the sense of a "right," and may imply the right to charity which is vested in the poor, with the correlative obligation on the part of the rich to respect this right.

In Ps. xxxvii, 21, the צדיק (man of צדקה), is filled with pity towards the needy, and gives charity. Ps. cxii, 3, 9, says of him who gives to the poor, that his צדקה<sup>2</sup> shall abide forever. *Ts'dakah* is here used for the meritorious act of charity. In verse 3, distinct reference is made to what a man does with his "plenty" and "riches." Prov. xxix, 7, speaks of one who considers the cause of the poor, i. e., one charitably disposed towards them, as a צדיק.

1. The LXX has *eleêmosynê*; the V. "misericordia"; Targ. זכורתא

2. The Targ. translates it זכותיה [his merit].

There are two instances in the later books, where **צדקה** stands directly for charity. Prov. x, 2, speaks of **צדקה**<sup>1</sup> as delivering from death, contrasting the word with **אוצרות רשע** (treasures of wickedness), wealth obtained by unfair dealing and disregard to laws regarding charity. In verse 3, the **צדיק** is an avaricious man will become in the end impoverished. The other assured that he shall not suffer because of his benefactions, but the passage is Dan. iv. 24. Daniel recommends to King Nebuchadnezzar to atone for his sins by **צדקה**, and for his wrongs by showing mercy to the poor. **צדקה** can mean, here, nothing else than charity.

From these various uses of **צדקה**, we see how the implication of charity arises, and how it finally becomes a synonym for charity.

From the connection with other words in which we find **צדקה**, there is offered further illustration of how it evolves into charity.

**צדקה** is often found in connection with words expressing the idea of love, mercy, justice. We find it very frequently with **משפט** and **חסד** (Ezek. xviii, 5; Jer. xxii, 16; Ps. lxxii, 1; Deut. xxxii, 21) **משפט** means a decision according to the merits of a case, regardless of who the parties are. It is the expression of justice in a given instance. Dt. warns judges not to warp the **משפט** in favor of poor or rich. When the **משפט** falls heavily on the poor, let charity begin. **משפט** is law, and **צדקה** equity. Law is general in its application, equity applies to individual cases.

This coupling of **צדקה** with **משפט** would mean

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<sup>1</sup>. All the Jewish commentators translate is "charity." It may be interesting to note that the words: **צדקה תציל ממות** "Charity delivereth from death (Prov. x, 2), are found inscribed on the poor-boxes which hang at the entrance of Jewish cemeteries.

that the rigor of the law should, after the ends of justice have been satisfied, be followed by charitable assistance. So the connection of **צדקה** with **חסד**<sup>a</sup> (mercy, kindness, charity, —Gen. xxi, 23; 2 Sam. x, 2; iii, 8 etc.) would show that there was the implication of kindness, mercy, in it. By close union, then, with these words, suggestive of kindness, consideration, charity, **צדקה** comes to be synonymous with them. Now, all these attributes are found in the just judge, in God. He judges with **צדקה** and **חסד** whenever he makes a **משפט**. This is His righteousness. Man becomes righteous (a **צדיק**), when he follows the attributes of God. Man's **צדקה** will, therefore, show itself in charitable conduct. This will mean that he knows God (Jer. xxii, 16). God stands also in the relation of protector to the "stranger," the "orphan," and the "widow." (Ps. x, 18; cxlvi, 9 etc.) He pleads the cause of the **גר**, the **יתום**, and the **אלמנה**. He will punish those who rob or defraud them. But those who protect these wards of the Lord,<sup>1</sup> do what is meritorious in the eyes of the Lord. It is ascribed unto them as a **צדקה** (see Prov. xxix, 17, where "He who hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord"). In acting charitably towards the poor, the stranger, orphan and widow, one performs an act of **צדקה** for which the Lord "credits" him.

The institution of first-fruits, tithes, and levitical assessments<sup>2</sup>, throws further light on the evolution of **צדקה** into charity.

a. See note 1, p. 30.

1. See Ex. xxii, 21; Lev. xix, 10, Dt. x, 18; xxvii, 19; Isai, i, 17, 23. Jer. vii, 6, etc. The **גר** was a protected, but dependent foreigner. He was liable to injustice and oppression. The **גר** finds in the Lord, protection, because he is economically weak. See Robt. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, p. 25, and *Kin. and Mar.*, pp. 41-43.

2. Though these are the priests' and levites' due from the Israelite, yet we find the giving of them enjoined and emphasized as a sort of charity to

The priests and levites who receive these assessments, are the Lord's. He is their heritage. The righteous man will conscientiously pay his debt to these ministers of the Lord. Only the wicked will rob the Lord, by depriving His servants of their rights. (Mal. iii, 8-12). To give these tithes, offerings, etc., is to express one's gratitude to God for His munificence, from which the tithes, etc., are taken. It will be charity towards the dependent class of priests and levites not to withhold from them their due, and as the righteous man will fulfill his duty in this respect, his צדקה or righteousness, becomes charity.

A religious significance of great importance was attached to the giving of the tithe of Dt. xiv. 28, 29. It had to be solemnly confessed (Dt. xxvi, 12). A strong bond between righteous conduct and charity was hence established.

So, leaving the corners of the field, gleanings of the vine and olive, to the poor and dependent classes, the stranger, orphan and widow, is enjoined as a religious duty. It is a charity to the poor. Obedience to this command, presupposes, on the part of him who does it, the recognition of the Lord's ownership of the earth, and that those who have possessions are but stewards of the Lord's wealth. And he who treats his riches as a gift of God, and gives thereof to the Lord's poor, is a צדיק, a man who practices צדקה.

The great importance the O. T. places on charity, may be seen in this derivation of it from righteousness. This evolution of צדקה into charity, illustrates a general tendency we find in language to gather many virtues together into one, which then assumes the greatest importance. So, צדקה which is applied to acts and

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them (see Dt. xviii; xxvi, 12, 13). The tithe of Dt. xiv, 28, 29, is called by the later Jews, מעשר עני. It is a sort of poor-rate. Its importance may be inferred from Dt. xxvi, 12. (Cf. Dicta of the Fathers, v, 11, where the omission of tithe-giving is visited with drought, hunger and poverty).

conduct pleasing to God, comes to signify the highest of them all—charity.

Charity becomes the paramount virtue to the Jewish mind. In the apocryphal books it is looked upon as possessing great efficacy. It is better than hoarding gold (Tobit, xii, 9) because it has the power to deliver from death. (see also Sirach iii, 3, 4, 14, 15, 30).

In the rabbinical literature, **צדקה** (charity,) becomes the most highly lauded virtue, and fine and subtle distinctions are drawn between various species of it. Charity is made one of the pillars upon which the earth, that is society, rests (Dicta, etc., i, 1). It is of more value than sacrifices. It is equal to the performance of all other religious duties (Talmud, tractate Succah 49b).

The opinion is often expressed by the rabbis, that the poor exist in the world in order to give righteous men an opportunity of laying up "merit" for themselves with God. By works of charity man proves himself a true image of God, whose attributes are love, kindness and mercy (Tractate Sotah 14a)<sup>1</sup>. He who gives of his substance, **צדקה** to the poor, will be blessed. For, this keeps the poor from reviling their maker. The giving of **צדקה** is, therefore, a highly religious act, because it reconciles men to God, it helps to keep them righteous.

**צדקה** is the "salt" of riches. If the rich do not give **צדקה** to the poor, their wealth will not abide with them. It will decay in their hands. (cf. Dicta. etc., iii, 17—**מעשרות סין לעושר** . . . . . "Tithes are a fence to riches"). The blessing of continued riches, and of a prosperous, wise and numerous progeny is promised to him who gives **צדקה**, as a reward for his righteous conduct.

1. The rabbinical inculcation of the virtue of charity because it makes man an image of God, is sought to be strengthened by the citation of Gen. iii, 20, and Deut. xxxiv, 6. The pentateuch, the rabbis say, begins and ends with an act of charity, clothing and burying.



Thus, the subauditions of righteousness and charity which we found **צדקה** to have in the O. T., are brought into closer union.

**צדקה** is, pre-eminently, the righteous act. The miser becomes, in the Talmud, an idolator.

As a practical result of the rabbinical doctrine concerning the religious importance of **צדקה**, Jewish synagogues, even the humblest places of worship, have "**צדקה** - boxes" near their entrance, to remind the worshipper of his religious duty to give **צדקה**, else all his piety has but little meaning.

But that **צדקה** may not lose its character of being an act of righteousness, and become, by reason of the poor depending on it, and doing nothing to alleviate their condition, something unrighteous in its practical working, the rabbis teach that the noblest of all **צדקה**, is to help the poor help themselves (Tractate, Sabbath 63a).

Charity is divided in the literature of the rabbis, into alms, for which **צדקה** is generally used, and "good works," for which we find the term **גמילות חסד** (the rendering of a benevolent act). *G'miluth chesed* is of wider application than *ts'dakah*. The former, it is taught, may be practiced by personal services, by advice, sympathy, encouragement, etc., whereas the latter only by means of money. *Ts'dakah* is a duty towards the poor only, but *g'miluth chesed* may be done to the rich as well. One can give *ts'dakah* only to the living, but can render *g'miluth chesed* to the dead, that is, by taking care of their decent burial. (Tractate Succah 49b).

Since *g'miluth chesed* is the generic term for benevolence of any kind, prompted by the deepest and truest spirituality in man (the **חסד**<sup>1</sup> applied to God in the O. T., being, according to Jewish

1. In the O. T. we find **חסד** used for the kindness, benevolence, etc., which man shows to his fellow-man in Gen xxi, 23; 2 Sam. x, iii, 8; ix, i, 7; Ruth ii, 20, etc. Observe that *kind* in English really means "kinned." A *kind*

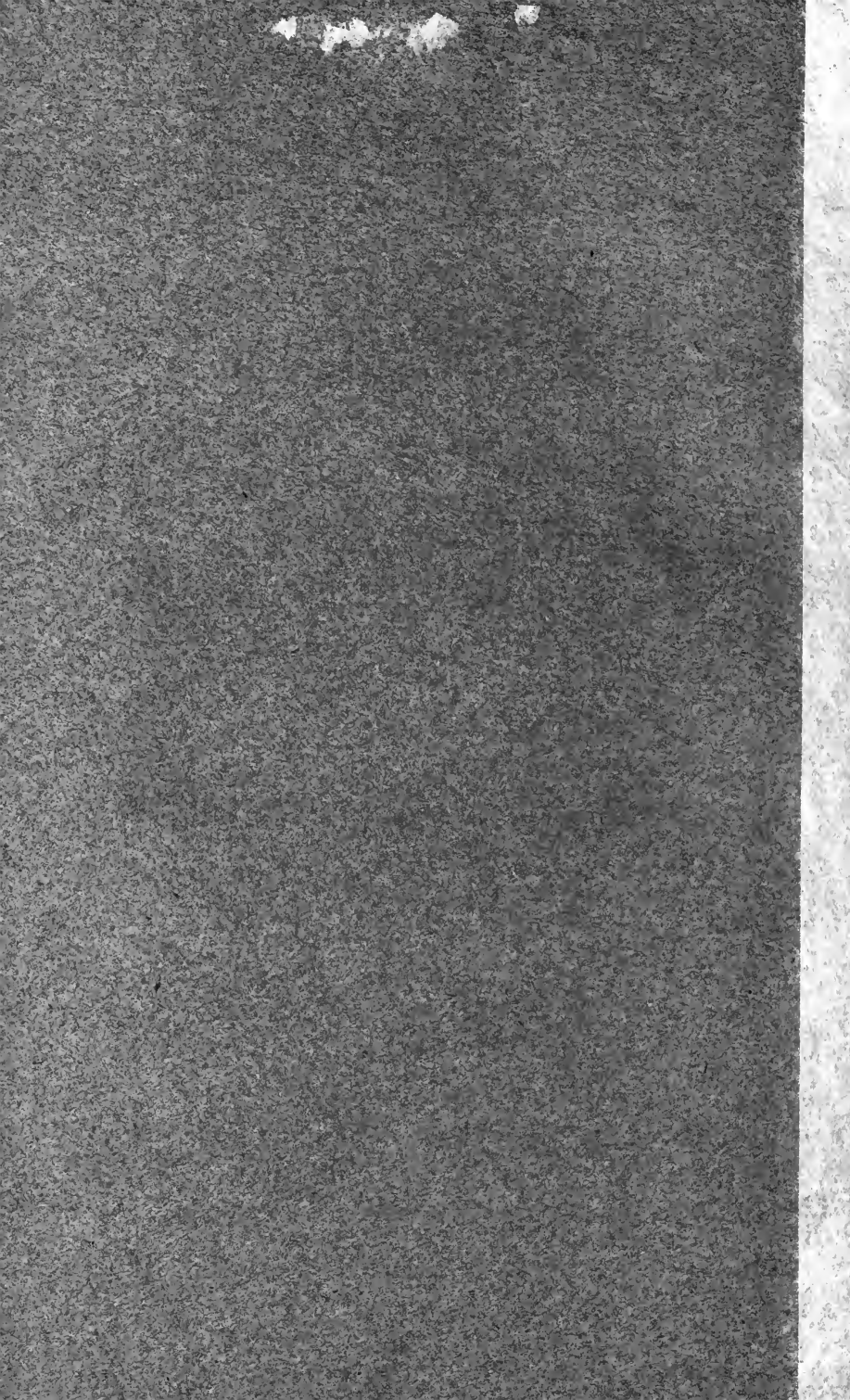
theology, the chief divine attribute) and *ts'dakah* (as alms), but one of its species, the frequent interchange of the latter for the former which we find in this literature, being used, often, as identical with it, evidences the fact that the צדקה of the O. T. (the general Old Testament term for righteousness) has had all its attributes concentrated into one, and has become charity.<sup>2</sup>

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person is one who acknowledges his kinship with his fellows, and because of this kinship recognizes that he owes them love. The practice of *chesed* and *ts 'dakah* is inculcated by the rabbis, because of the brotherhood that exists between the "children of one father," that is, God (cf. Mal. ii, 10). The *chesed* of God, spoken of in the O. T. is, according to Jewish theology, granted gratuitously to man. "We are in debt to God, but He owes us nothing."

2. The rabbis exercised their mental subtlety in classifying the givers of *ts 'dakah*. See Maimonides ( כתנות עניים "Poor-gifts," Ch. vii). He arranges them thus: (1) He who helps the poor to sustain himself by giving a loan or taking him into business with him; (2) He who gives to the poor without knowing to whom he gives, while the recipient is also ignorant of the giver; (3) He who gives secretly, knowing the recipient, but the latter remaining ignorant as to his benefactor's name; (4) He who gives, not knowing the recipient, but the recipient knowing from whom he obtains relief; (5) He who gives (both knowing) before he is asked; (6) He who gives after he is asked; (7) He who gives inadequately, but with a good grace; (8) He who gives with a bad grace. In Aboth the נותני צדקה (givers of charity) are thus classed: He who desires to give, but does not wish others to give, is evilly disposed towards others (since almsgiving brings blessing to the giver). He who desires that others should give, but will not give himself, his eye is evil against himself. He who gives and wishes others to give, is a saint (חסיד). He who will not give, and does not wish others to give is a wicked man (רשע). (Dicta of the Fathers v. 16.) Owing to these rabbinical doctrines, the "*ts 'dakah-box*" was always in evidence, on all occasions of life, joyous or sad, and the maxim "Charity will never make a man poor, but the giving thereof bring him much blessing," was given practical effect.







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